Revelation ceased! Let’s be satisfied with Illumination

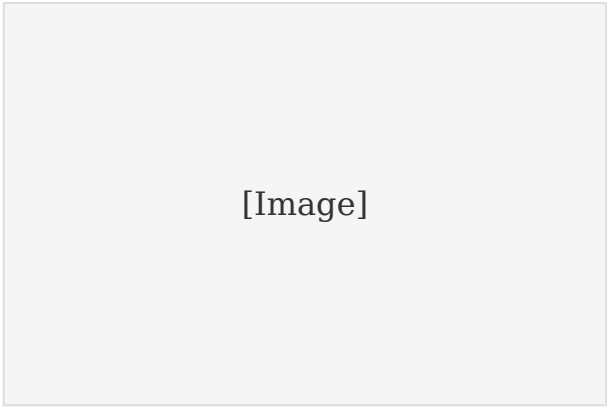
Confex Makhalira

Is it only me or you have also noticed it? It seems there is a certain kind of hunger for some Christians, today, to know more than what is revealed in Scripture. They long to get ‘special revelations’ from God about various issues whether personal or otherwise. They tend to feel that the Bible is not enough hence they should look for special ‘men of God’ who have ‘special messages from God’ for them. These special messages are usually referred to as ‘revelations.’

Now this has serious implications for our Christian life. But may be before we talk about the implications; let’s define ‘revelation’ so that we are all on same page. Some people sincerely confuse ‘revelation’ with illumination. When they are reading a Biblical passage and the Holy Spirit opens their mind to understand the passage better, they end up calling that revelation.

However, this is not revelation; it is what is called illumination in theology. So, how is revelation different from illumination? Revelation is an act of God whereby he made known his truth and will to his people. This truth and will eventually ended up being recorded for us in Scripture. Illumination is an act of God whereby through the Holy Spirit he enables us to grasp and understand his revealed truth. Let me add here that revelation ceased when the Bible (66 books) was compiled for us.

While some may sincerely confuse revelation with illumination, the revelation that we are against is the one whereby one says “God has told me… or God has shown me…” Do you know the serious implication of such statements? It means that God has spoken directly to that person in the same way he spoke to the Prophets and Apostles in order for them to write the Bible for us hence it means that



what they are saying is as good as the words of the Bible. Remember, the Bible is a recording of God’s Word that God spoke to his Prophets and Apostles through the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16).

Now, how many of us can really stand up and declare that what these special “men or women of God” say should be treated with the same reverence we treat the Bible with? Or to put it in other words, if these men or women of God are to record whatever they say that God has told them in a book, will you really say that their book is at par with the Bible? Do you see now why I say that ‘revelations’ have very serious implications to our Christian life?

Allow me to wrap up this reflection with the words of Chuck Swindol which I listened to in his program, ‘Insight for Living. The title of his teaching was, “Be sure of your source.”

> **“Let me pass along three great theological doctrines that will continue to be the watershed of importance in every generation. First: revelation. Second: inspiration. Third: illumination. Let’s understand the difference:**
>
> **Revelation: God revealing or making his truth known to mankind.**
>
> **Inspiration: Man’s receiving and recording the divine truth in accurate form…to become Scripture**
>
> **Illumination: Our understanding and applying the truth in our everyday life.**
>
> **Revelation ceased. Inspiration ceased. Illumination continues to go on.**

> **Our need is not to find some source to give us God's revelation. Nor is it our desire to locate someone 'inspired of God' through whom we can receive and record His message to us. *Our need is to get hold of what has been written (in the Bible) and apply it regularly*" (Italics added).**

So, there is no special revelation from God today because God's full revelation is recorded for us in the Bible. What God has left us today is illumination. Let's be satisfied with it. Always remember, "All secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

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